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ABSTRACT

Fifteen males and 15 females (ages 8.0 to 8.8) who had been identified as gifted were studied to compare their attitudes toward handicapped individuals as measured by the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP). Form O of the ATDP Scale was used and a one-way analysis of variance showed a significant difference between males and females, supporting other studies which have found females to be more positive. The adequacy and promise of the ATDP are considered. (RJ)

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SEX DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF YOUNG MALE AND FEMALE GIFTED YOUNGSTERS TOWARD HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS

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SEX DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF YOUNG MALE AND FEMALE GIFTED YOUNGSTERS TOWARD HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS

The concept of attitude has played a central role in the development of social psychology in America. There are numerous definitions and theories of attitude. Attitude is defined by Kerlinger (1966) as a predisposition to think, perceive, and behave toward a cognitive object. He goes on to assert that one has an attitude toward something "out there." Kiesler, Collins, and Miller (1969) conclude in their review of the literature on definitions, that in operational terms, one's definition is predicated upon the specific instrumentation employed to measure attitudes. The focus of interest and effort of investigation for this study will be directed toward the measurement of attitudes of young gifted children toward handicapped individuals as measured by the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons scale (ATDP). This study will attempt to answer the question as to whether there is a difference between young male and female gifted children and their attitude toward handicapped persons as measured on the ATDP.

Yuker, Block, and Younng (1966) provide an excellent review of a number of studies that have been conducted that have attempted to determine what relationship, if any, exists between attitudes toward disability and the sex of the respondent. In their review of 13 studies dealing with the relationship between sex and the ATDP for non-disabled subjects there is some discrepancy in the results: some of the studies reported a relationship between sex and the ATDP for non-disabled subjects there is some discrepancy in the results: some of the studies reported a relationship between sex and ATDP scores, while other studies reported a lack of relationship. This discrepancy may be accounted for in part by the differences in the statistical techniques employed. Seven studies reported a significant difference between males and females, with females scoring with higher ATDP scores in five of the seven studies, thus indicating that they are more accepting of the handicapped than are the males. It is important to make clear that the males are also accepting of the handicapped, but to a less degree than the females. This point is made to avoid misconception that the two groups are polarized on an acceptance-rejection continuum.

The samples drawn in 10 of the studies were from high school or college student populations, while 3 others used hospital personnel. No studies were found in which the ATDP and sex involved either gifted individuals or very young children. This study differs from previous studies in that

the sample used differs in two respects from previous samples in other studies: very young children are used, and they have been identified as being mentally gifted.

In addition to the studies cited by Yuker, Block, and Younng (1966) there is a recent study by Lazar, Orpet, and Fogg (1971) which found a significant relationship between sex and ATDP scores. This study utilized a sample of 100 male and 100 female college students attending a summer session of instruction.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to compare the attitudes of young male and female children identified as being mentally gifted toward handicapped individuals as measured by the ATDP scale. In addition, a brief comparison will be made with some normative data provided by Yuker, Block, and Younng (1966).

METHODOLOGY

Subjects: The Ss were 15 males and 15 females matched for CA and IQ that were attending a special workshop for gifted children on a college campus during a summer session. In Table 1, data about the two groups in

INSERT TABLE 1

regards sex, sample size, CA and IQ, and ATDP scores is given. A study of this table will indicate that the males have a 1 month CA advantage over the females, but that the girls have a wider range span. The males also have a greater IQ means score than the females, and a wider IQ range spread.

Because there was a slight difference in mean IQ scores between the two groups which amounted to 3.4 points, a simple one-way analysis of variance was made to ascertain that there was no significant statistical differences between the two sex groups. In Table 2, data is reported on this check for possible difference based upon IQ of the two groups. No significance was found, thus supporting the notion that the two groups are comparably matched for IQ.

INSERT TABLE 2

Procedure: The ATDP Form-O was administered by the senior author to all Ss as a group test on the first day of the workshop. No physical handicaps were observed by the investigator, nor reported by the classroom teachers. Data on IQ and CA was provided the investigators by the teachers taking data from individual pupil cum records. It required about 25 minutes to administer the instrument. All written instructions and the 20 test items were read by the senior author during the administration of the test, while the students read the same in silence. This was done to reduce any questions that might arise should the student not know a word. After the administration of the test, it was realized that the oral reading was not necessary. About five minutes was required to explain the purpose of the activity and how to score their response. The total time for administration was 30 minutes.

ATDP: The ATDP Form-O was used in this study, but as adapted for item number two as reported by Lazar, Gensley, and Orpet (1971). In their study an effort was made to compare the effectiveness of a special instructional program as a source for attitude change, the ATDP was used on a pre-post basis to measure for a shift. The word "physically" was deleted from the second item so as to avoid a response set on the part of the respondents.

The Form-O scale consists of twenty items, with each being responded to on a six point scale: I agree very much, I agree pretty much, I agree little, I disagree little, I disagree pretty much, and I disagree very much. These alternatives are weighted +3, +2, +1, -1, -2, -3, respectively. The Ss responded to each item by entering the appropriate weight in the space provided to the left of each item.

Each of the 20 statements suggest that disabled persons are either the same as or different from normal people. The positive-negative classification of ATDP items fits well with Himes (1951) description of individualized and stereotypical attitudes, although the scale results in a continuum of scores rather than a dichotomy. In scoring the ATDP the first step is to change the signs of all the items with positive wording. By definition, a positive item is one which indicates that disabled persons are not different from non-disabled. The possible range of scores can be from 0 to 120, the high score reflecting the maximum possible positive attitude.

Results: A one-way analysis of variance treatment was made of the sex and ATDP scores, using a Wang Computer and Program to statistically handle the data. Results are reported in Table 3, and a significant difference was found between males and females at the .05 level of significance. It would appear that the results of this study would support the other studies in which a sex difference favoring the females as being more accepting were reported.

INSERT TABLE 3

As indicated in Table 4, the young gifted females scored higher than females in the general normal population based upon normative data provided by Yuker, Block, and Younng (1966), whereas the males more closely matched their counterparts in the general population.

INSERT TABLE 4

Discussion: The limited sample size does restrict any generalizations that can be made regarding either young children responses, or gifted children per se. What might be derived from this study is the notion and design for a similar study with a larger sample size to replicate the effort using the sex and ATDP variables. It would seem however, that there is little difference in response due to age of subjects, at least for gifted young children, and that, in general, girls are more accepting of the handicapped than boys.

Shaw and Wright (1967) assert in their review of many attitude scales that the ATDP had better supporting data than most scales, and despite some question concerning its validity, the scale was adequate for research purposes. Wilson and Alcorn (1969) using a pre-post design failed to find any differences on ATDP scores in an attempt to discover if there was a relationship between simulation of a disabled condition for an 8 hour period and changes in attitude toward disability. In contrast, Lazar, Gensley, and Orpet (1971) did find a significant attitude shift as the result of a 4 week special instruction program in their experimental group using a pre-post test design with the ATDP as the criterion measure.

If it is possible to produce a significant shift in attitude as a result of special instruction, the findings reported here may result from the special training those gifted children have received and the sex difference reported may be due to different treatment awarded boys and girls. If we want greater acceptance of the handicapped by all persons in our society, an examination of the educational practices by the parents and teachers of the females in this sample may provide some clues for educational programs. On the other hand if, after special training, the sex differences found here still exist, then we must be prepared to explain this difference in some other way than situational variables. There is also the possibility that a sex bias exists in the ATDP itself. Perhaps girls are more willing to express stronger opinions because they get into less trouble when doing so. In any event further study should be undertaken.

Summary: The purpose of this study was to compare the attitudes of young male and female students identified as gifted. The ATDP scale was used as the criterion measure for comparison. The results, using analysis of variance treatment, revealed at the .05 level of significance that females were more accepting. It would appear that further research is needed regarding the attitudes that various groups have toward handicapped individuals. The ATDP has demonstrated promise as an instrument for this task.

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TABLE 1

Sex, N, CA and IQ Means and Ranges, ATDP Scores

Group	N	CA Mean	CA Range	IQ Mean	IQ Range	Mean ATDP Scores
Males	15	8-5	8-1---8-7	140.1	129 - 163	72.13
Females	15	8-4	8-0---8-8	136.7	126 - 150	79.86

TABLE 2

Analysis of Variance
IQ and Sex

SOURCE OF VARIATION	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sex Differences	56.03	1	56.03	.915	n.s.
Within Groups	1715.33	28			

α .05 1,28 df = 4.20

TABLE 3

Analysis of Variance
ATDP & Sex

SOURCE OF VARIATION	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sex Differences	448.53	1	448.53	6.661	< .05
Within Groups	1885.47	28			

χ .05 1, 28 df = 4.20

χ .01 1, 28 df = 7.64

TABLE 4

Comparison of ATDP Scores and Sex from Normative
Cited by Authors of ATDP and this
Study

SOURCE OF DATA	SEX	N	ATDP MEAN SCORE
Yuker, Block & Younng	Male	1689	72.80
	Female	1410	75.42
Lazar, Orpet & Revie	Male	15	72.13
	Female	15	79.86